

**29th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers of justice**  
**“Breaking the silence – united against domestic violence”**  
Tromsø, 18-19 June 2009

**SPEECH**

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**on behalf of the European Co-ordination Forum for the CoE Disability Action Plan**  
**2006-2015 (CAPAH)**

Honourable Chair, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen!

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to take the floor on behalf of CAPAH, the European Co-ordination Forum for the Council of Europe (CoE) Disability Action Plan 2006-2015.

CAPAH is the main forum for disability issues in the CoE. We have elaborated the so called Disability Action Plan.

This Plan is a roadmap for policy makers:

- It translates the aims of the CoE with regard to human rights, non discrimination or equal opportunities for persons with disabilities (PWD).
- It promotes the paradigm shift to a human rights based approach in disability issues.
- And it is a regional tool for the implementation of the UN-Convention for PWD.

My name is Robert Bechina. I do work in the Austrian Administration, the Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection.

Today I do represent CAPAH.

Ladies and gentlemen! Awareness-raising is more important as ever. In particular for disadvantaged groups. So this is my job today. Whenever there is a conference of importance CAPAH pays attention to the situation of PWD.

The situation of PWD is marked in a way that PWD used to be very long victims in many counts. Domestic violence plays a major part.

Breaking the silence is a priority! We do very much appreciate that you brought that theme and questions of violence and abuse to the floor by this conference to a greater public.

But I'd like to go beyond: Wherever human rights and dignity are respected there exists less violence and abuse. From that background CAPAH has elaborated a paper titled: "Equal recognition before the law."

What does that mean? Equal recognition before the law in our view is a precondition and essential for a meaningful and self determined life.

Ladies and gentlemen! Just think on your very personal situations:

- You have decided to go to this Conference. Maybe you also will be part of the social programme.

- As many ministers attend this meeting: Think on your week and all the decisions you have taken.
- Beyond that: All of you have entered agreements, e.g. in selling or renting your home or making contracts in so various private or administrative ways.
- Do you think PWD have all done that in the same extend and without fear in their lives, so as you see it as self-evident in your life?

This is the focus. CAPAH would like to pay your attention to that point and so to compare your life and the decisions you take to others.

And it is so important to say that in that circle. Not only because were PWD disadvantaged so long so hard.

But specially here today because you as ministers for justice or as high ranking officials in your administrations have such a great influence on the daily life-situations of PWD by your judgements and your decision makings.

You do have the chance to affect and influence the situation and so to enable PWD a more inclusive and pro active life by taking the right decisions in your national legislations.

That means: To make policies for PWD

- Policies which eliminate discriminations!
- Policies which break silences!
- Policies to reach the goal of full integration and participation of PWD!

Ladies and gentlemen! We CAPAH are happy to take part in the dialogue on your conference and we also do like to express our thanks to Norway for their great hospitality!

We very much appreciate that & we wish you well!

Thank you for your attention!